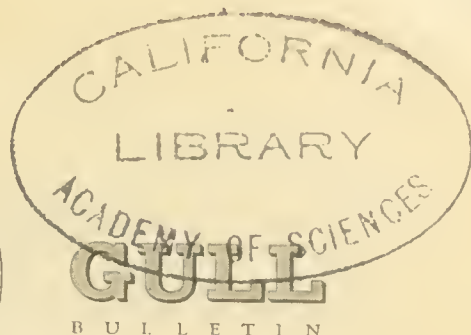


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# THE

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**JUNE MEETING:** Members of the Audubon Association of the Pacific are cordially invited to attend the Meeting Of the Cooper Ornithological Club, to be held at Mills College at two o'clock p.m., Thursday, June 17th, under the auspices of the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Mr. Ralph Hoffmann, of Santa Barbara, will give an address upon "Field Notes on the Courtship Performances and Songs of Birds." Mr. Hoffmann has spent the last few weeks in the field and writes that he has had many favorable opportunities to study the glide of the western grebe, the aquatic sports of the pigeon guillemot, the night life of the Beal petrel, the winnowing of the Wilson (Jack) Snipe, the "song" of the female Wilson phalarope and the strutting of the sage grouse.

Dr. Tracy L. Storer will read a paper upon the "Range Extension by the Western Robin in California."

In pursuance of this invitation, it has been determined to postpone the regular June meeting of the Association for one week, in order that members may avail themselves of this opportunity.

Mills College grounds are accessible by motor cars from the easterly end of Lake Merritt, *via* Excelsior Ave., Hopkins St. and Calaveras Ave., or from the Melrose district, *via* High St., Hopkins St. and Calaveras Ave. From San Francisco, take 12:40 p.m. Key Route ferry, and 12th. St. train at the mole, transferring to car line K at Shredded Wheat station, and leave car at Mills College station, which is reached at 1:45 p.m. Those who can arrange to take earlier ferry boat will be able to enjoy a trip around the campus prior to the meeting.

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**JUNE FIELD TRIP** will be taken, as usual, on Sunday, June 13th, to Fairfax and over the old grade to Bon Tempe and the head of Alpine Lake, returning *via* Lake Lagunitas and the fish grade to Ross, a distance of about ten miles.

Purchase round trip tickets to Fairfax, 60c, and take Sausalito ferry leaving foot of Market St. at 8:15 a.m. Bring lunch and canteen.

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**PROCEEDINGS OF MAY MEETING:** The one hundred-twelfth regular meeting of the Association was held on May 13th, in the Assembly Hall of the San Francisco Public Library, with President Kibbe in the chair; Mr. I. M. Parry, Secretary; 12 members in attendance.

After a brief routine of business, Mr. Carl R. Smith, Vice-President, entertained the members with a graphic account of "Reminiscences of Will Life in the Territory of the Dakotas." The speaker's boyhood was passed in the centre of the territory, about four miles north of what is now the boundary

between North and South Dakota. This is a region of rolling plains, cut by sloughs, raising a heavy crop of wild rice. In April, when the warm "chinook" commences to blow and thaw the snow, the sloughs fill with water. If the chinook ceases, freezing weather ensues, the grass freezes and breaks and scratches up the snow and the blizzard starts. Mr. Smith apparently felt that the climate left something to be desired, as he characterized it as "Winter for nine months, and 'late in the Fall' for the other three months". The only vegetable which they could raise satisfactorily was the potato. The indians built canoes or boats of cottonwood frames, over which buffalo or cattle hides were stretched. Four squaws in a boat would glean five or six sacks of wild rice in a day. Buffalo hides, tanned by the squaws, could be bought for fifteen dollars, and lasted indefinitely. Antelope covered the plains in bands of thousands. Prairie dogs and flicker-tail gophers, badgers and skunks were plentiful, and the latter killed the young water fowl and ate the eggs. Foxes were numerous, but coyotes, few. Then there were prairie, or buffalo, wolves smaller than the gray wolf. Weasels and jack-rabbits abounded, changing in winter from tawny or gray to white for diametrically opposite purposes.

Bird life was most plentiful. The meadowlark was the first arrival and often suffered from storms. Next came the bobolink, nesting in colonies. When disturbed, the males would all rise, but the females would not fly, but skulked through the buffalo grass. If one returned to the nesting grounds just at dusk, the females might be flushed, and if the location were noted, the nest might be found in the daytime. When the bobolink came, the snow was over for the season.

Then came the ducks; mallard, gadwall, baldpate, blue-winged and cinnamon teal, pintail, redhead, canvas-back, ring-necked, (known locally as the black duck), all nesting in large numbers. A few golden-eyes nested there, and they were plentiful in the Fall migration, but none in the Spring. Shovellers were rare, and mergansers were seen only in migration. Mr. Smith cannot recall seeing any ruddy ducks in that country. Nesting commenced a week or ten days after the ducks arrived. The female selected a depression in the ground and lined it with down plucked from her breast during the next three to five days. Then came the first egg, followed by the second on the third day and the third on the fifth day, and daily additions thereafter up to an average of twelve eggs. The eggs are turned every second day during incubation, and the nests may be visited if there are not too many people around.

Following the ducks came the brant and then the honkers. Armed with a button on the wing and a heavy nail on the bill, these birds were equipped to bestow a severe beating and nipping on intruders. Next came the waders. Snipe were rare, killdeer numerous and prairie plover were so plentiful that one might take, in a day, enough to feed twenty people. Phalarope, Hudsonian curlew and avocets came in quantities, and sandhill cranes formed a staple article of diet, two or three barrel-fuls being salted down each year. The cranes were the highest and slowest fliers, winging their way around and around in circles and working out of sight slowly. They built their nests thirty inches high on the open prairies and were very militant when disturbed, having mauled men very badly time and again. Then there were the whooping cranes, which posted sentinels and relieved each other systematically, so that at no time were they all feeding at once.

Black terns nested in the rushes and another tern in fair quantities. Blackbirds abounded, especially the yellow-head. Sitting Bull possessed a robe made from 4,000 yellow-headed blackbird skins, and ornamented further with four cardinal, or fire-bird heads. Red-wings, Brewer blackbirds and cowbirds were also numerous, and in the winter, snow buntings and great white, or snowy, owls would come down from the north. Then there were

the bitterns, birds with no enemies. The indians killed only what they wanted to use, and they would eat everything except bitterns.

The speaker drew a vivid and intensely interesting picture of prairie life in a severe climate in the late 80's, among a population, of which 90% consisted of indians, and of the 10% of white settlers, more than half were engaged in raising cattle; where common hands received as wages \$8 per month and board; top hands, \$10, and busters and foremen as much as \$12 or \$15; where the men were called at 4:30 a.m. and worked without lunch until dark, when supper was served. These were surely of the great open spaces, where men had to be men, if they designed to remain above ground.

The meeting adjourned with expressions of appreciation and enjoyment.

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The Board of Directors held a meeting prior to that of the Association.

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### 1926 BIRD BOX CONTEST IN PETALUMA

The Garden Club of Petaluma, of which Mr. Arthur D. Ayers is President, held its annual flower show in American Legion Hall on April 24th, and prizes were again offered for the most attractive and practicable bird boxes submitted by children of school age. The entrants were even younger in age than those of last year, but there was a marked improvement in the exhibits at this time. Boxes were judged by A. S. Kibbe, of Berkeley. First prize was awarded to Vernon E. Owen; second, to George Tomasino, and third, to James Morris.

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### VISIT TO A BAIRD CORMORANT COLONY

On Sunday, May 30th, Mrs. Kibbe and the writer enjoyed the treat of a study of these interesting birds at home on a rugged rocky point on the coast, about two miles northerly from the foot of Bear Valley, which extends from Olema to the ocean, through the preserve of the Country Club of Marin County. A count was not made on the ground, but photographs covering the entire colony show the population to comprise some three hundred birds, while foraging absentees might possibly bring the total number close to four hundred. An hour or more was spent inspecting the colony at close range, but comparatively few of the birds exposed the white flank spots to view, although they all conformed in other respects with the characteristics of the species.

Eggs were seen under some of the birds. Others were brooding downy gray nestlings, while families of five, two adults and three young nearly ready to leave the nest, were trying to prove that they could all crowd into "the dear old crater". The naked young, of which there must have been some, were kept covered by the old birds while we were there. A group of western gulls patrolled a portion of the area assiduously, now huddling in a depression at some point of vantage, and again wandering around among the nests, approaching as close as they dared and scrutinizing the occupants of each nest in the hope of finding some potential victim exposed to onslaught. The brooding parent stretched his or her neck as far as possible toward the marauder and threatened him with battle, murder and sudden death, but for some reason, the idle birds standing around made no attempt to drive the gull away, as it seemed they might well have done.

Faithfully to the Baird tradition, every pocket in the vertical face of the bluff, large enough to hold one bird, was occupied by a nest. Many of the



## THE GULL

birds, however, were obliged to be content with a location on a wider shelf which might accommodate twenty or more nests, while others, perforce, built on the comparatively level foundation of a forty-five degree slope. If a Baird cormorant ever discovered a bat sleeping up-side-down, with a precarious foothold on the under side of some rocky cave roof, she would probably spend the rest of her life trying to figure out a way of nesting likewise.

Large rocks off-shore were crowded with cormorants and murre, but it was impossible to determine whether any of the latter were nesting.

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A. S. KIBBE.

**MAY FIELD TRIP** was taken on Sunday, May 16th, to Cashion, Contra Costa County, in the district drained by Las Trampas Creek, between Mulholland Hill and the Las Trampas Ridge. The day was warm and sunny. The typical bird habitats of the region were grain fields, roadside eucalypts, the association of oak, willow and shrubbery along the creek, and finally, the wooded canyon.

The birds were out in numbers, the summer visitants being especially conspicuous. During the walk we enjoyed a continuous concert. It was quite a task to disentangle the notes of the various species, but the most persistent and indefatigable singers were the black-headed grosbeak and the western warbling vireo.

Cliff swallows were nesting under the eaves of a barn; Brewer blackbirds, linnets and mourning doves in the eucalypts. A golden eagle, (identified by Mr. Cliff), was soaring high in the air. He appeared much larger than the western red-tail which was in view at the same time.

Birds encountered on the Bay were: Western, California and Bonaparte gulls, Farallon cormorant and western sandpiper. At Cashion: California quail, western mourning dove, turkey vulture, western red-tailed hawk and golden eagle; red-shafted flicker, Anna and Allen hummers, olive-sided flycatcher and western wood pewee; western flycatcher, coast and California jays, western crow and bi-colored redwing; western meadowlark, Bullock oriole, Brewer blackbird, California purple finch and linnet; green-backed and Lawrence goldfinches, song sparrow, San Francisco and California brown towhees; Pacific black-headed grosbeak, lazuli bunting, cliff swallow and western warbling vireo; lutescent, yellow and golden pileolated warblers, California thrasher and western house wren; plain titmouse, coast bush-tit, intermediate wren-tit, russet-backed thrush and western bluebird. Forty-four species in all.

Members in attendance were: Misses Boegle, Martha Crum, Ethel Crum; Mrs. Myer; Messrs. Myer and Cliff. As a guest, Mrs. Juda.

ETHEL CRUM.

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## AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Recording Secretary.....	I. M. Parry.....	277 Bartlett St., San Francisco
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Meets second Thursday of each month, at 8:00 p.m., in Assembly Hall of San Francisco  
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Address Bulletin correspondence to President.

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